



For Immediate Release
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**Testimony of
Representative Josh Zepnick, Ranking Minority Member of the Assembly Energy and Utilities
Committee
Wisconsin Electric Power Company/Wisconsin Gas LLC
Docket 5-UR-107**

My name is State Representative Josh Zepnick and I am a senior member of the Assembly Energy and Utilities Committee.

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide comments on the We Energies rate increase and also some more specific comments on the portion of the We Energies rate case that reduce subsidization of customer owned generation.

I am opposed to any net increase to WE customer's monthly bill that exceeds 1%. During the difficult economic times any increase is a burden on working families. I do understand the need for fairness when it comes to sustaining the power grid and treating those on fixed incomes, poor, and those that are disabled in a fair way. There are good reasons to slightly adjust fixed rate, with the key assumption that variable rates are lowered.

Now let me address the topic of subsidies.

Wisconsin utilities have invested over \$2 billion in renewable energy during the past decade and we are all paying for that investment. However, some of those raising issues in this case believe "more is better" and are seeking not only the ability to have renewable energy as part of our energy mix but to have others pay for their projects and avoid paying their fair share. The overwhelming majority of Wisconsin families and businesses should not be forced to pay more so that a select few can pay less. That's not the Wisconsin way.

As the marketplace for various types of energy evolve, subsidies to incent renewable energy are no longer appropriate. WE Energies, other investor owned utilities, municipal utilities and cooperative utilities should reconsider subsidies to customers who own their own generating systems.

As it is set up today, customers who do not have or cannot afford their own generating systems pay a greater share of the cost of maintaining Wisconsin's reliable grid. I support the proposed portions of this case that create a step toward fairness for all our customers who use the grid.

Providing high-cost, long-term subsidies for customer owned generation is not in the public interest.
Wisconsinites deserve an energy policy that is fair and makes sound economic sense for all customers.

The right thing was done, and a step in a positive direction when we proposed to provide a grandfathering period for rates applied to customers that own renewable energy systems such as wind and rooftop solar.

All existing long-term contracts will be honored; WE proposes the continuation of the current rate provisions for a 10-year grandfathering period for customers with wind or solar systems that do not have long-term contracts.

WE came to this decision after talking with customers that have invested in wind and solar systems and I believe the proposal is very fair and should be approved.

However, the proposal ensures that owners of future renewable generating systems pay their fair share of the system costs.

In closing, I stand with hard working men, and woman who in many cases are the ones who are working to provide safe and affordable services in this field by supporting the equitable rates for distributed generation.

I echo many of the concerns that the WI State AFL-CIO shared, especially their advocacy for family supporting jobs. (See attached Resolution)

Thank you.

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